

Water Strategy Framework for Implementation

Priority Area: Ensure safe drinking water

The Water Strategy includes a set of recommendations to ensure safe drinking water. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Health and Human Services work together to ensure safe drinking water for all Michigan residents and visitors and to protect public health. Many regulatory and voluntary programs and activities are currently in place at the local and state level to protect drinking water and public health. Ensuring safe drinking water and protection of public health involves protection of source water, proper treatment of drinking water, maintaining the integrity of the distribution system and infrastructure, and certain responsibilities of the consumer and of governments. Sound, modern infrastructure is vital to the health and well-being of people of Michigan.

In April 2016, Governor Snyder announced the formation of the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission. Its charge is to identify long-term strategies to help ensure Michigan's infrastructure is safe and efficient now and into the future. The MDEQ and the MDHHS are assisting the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission in data gathering for assessments and reports. The MDEQ and the MDHHS will further define key actions necessary to support investments in drinking water infrastructure and protection efforts based on findings of the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

Key actions and initiatives beyond the activities listed below will be determined by the findings of the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission.

- The MDEQ and MDHHS will enhance and further integrate current work underway by the agencies with the work and recommendations of the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission.
- The MDEQ will develop and update educational materials focused on both residents on private water wells and those connected to public water supplies.
- The MDEQ, in collaboration with the MDHHS and other agencies, will implement steps to improve information and data sharing to identify and respond to identified contaminants and emerging pollutants of concern.
- The MDEQ will prioritize and incentivize source water protection efforts (both groundwater and surface water) through state funding programs. All new municipal community water sources should implement a Source Water Protection Program, and such protections should be required for highly susceptible community systems.
- The MDEQ will provide asset management training workshops and guidance documents for community water supply systems including pricing and funding strategies and communication tools to build customer support for water infrastructure investments.
- The MDEQ will work with the legislature to secure long-term funding to continue to enhance source water protection programs at state and local levels, provide for alternative water supplies where source water is compromised (i.e. bottled water for temporary use and replacement wells or new municipal connection for permanent long-term use) and remediate contamination in soil and groundwater.
- Grant funding criteria will be updated to allow for the prioritizations of State grant dollars to ensure safe drinking water.
- The MDHHS, under a cooperative agreement with the National Center for Environmental Health, is collaborating with local health departments and the MDEQ to compile state and local drinking water regulations and conduct a comparative analysis focused on identifying data gaps in Michigan's private well drinking water programs. Under this funding, the Division of Environmental Health will also design and implement effective public outreach activities for vulnerable areas of Michigan and for statewide dissemination.

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